United Nations A/ES-10/PV.13

General Assembly
Tenth Emergency Special Session

Official Records

13th meeting
Wednesday, 18 October 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

President Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

The President: I declare the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly resumed pursuant to General Assembly resolution ES-10/6 of 9 February 1999, whereby the Assembly decided

> "to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the most recent General Assembly to resume its meeting upon request from Member States".

In this connection, I should like to draw the attention of delegations to the following documents. Document A/ES-10/36 contains a letter dated 13 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, in which he requested, on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States, the resumption of the tenth emergency special session. Document A/ES-10/37 contains a letter dated 13 October 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of South Africa to the United Nations in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, by which he conveyed the support of the Movement for the request by the members of the League of Arab States to resume the tenth emergency special session.

In accordance with rule 63 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the President and Vice-Presidents of the fifty-fifth session will serve in the same capacity at the resumed tenth emergency special session.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to decide that the Credentials Committee of the fifty-fifth session should serve for the resumed tenth emergency special session?

It was so decided.

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/ES-10/38 and Add.1)

The President: In keeping with the established practice, I should now like to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/ES-10/38, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General informing the Assembly that 16 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

> "A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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The President: I should also like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/ES-10/38/Add.1. In the letter contained in that document, the Secretary-General informs the President that, since the issuance of his communications contained in document A/ES-10/38, Haiti has made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/ES-10/38/Add.1?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President: I would like to inform the Assembly that, after consultations with several Members, it is my understanding that at this 1st meeting of the resumed tenth emergency special session, we will hear a limited number of speakers. The next meeting of the emergency special session will take place on Friday, 20 October 2000, at 3 p.m.

At the outset of the Friday afternoon meeting, the Secretary-General intends to make a statement on the latest developments in connection with this item, and then the Assembly will hear the remaining speakers.

On that understanding, we shall hear at this meeting the observer of Palestine, the representative of Israel, the representative of Senegal, in his capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, and the representative of South Africa, who will speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Agenda item 5 (*continued*)

Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): At a time when we all have come to believe that the international community is heading for success in decolonization and eradicating the remnants of foreign occupation, the Israeli occupation of our Palestinian land and people stands as a unique phenomenon that has stubbornly continued for more than 33 years. Worse still is that this occupation is coupled with blatant colonial behaviour through the illegal transfer of the population of the occupying Power to the occupied territory and the attempts to colonize this land. Israel is the only State considered at this time to be an occupying Power; moreover, it combines its occupation with blatant colonial behaviour.

Does the atrocity stop there? The experience of the Israeli occupation of our Palestinian people indicates that there is still greater malignancy. It emerges when occupation and colonialism are combined with the frequent, excessive and unjustified use of force by the occupying forces, leading to a very large number of casualties among the people.

During approximately the past three weeks, the occupying Power has killed more than 90 Palestinian martyrs and injured more than 3,000 Palestinians, many of whom remain in serious condition. One third of those killed and injured are children under the age of 18. During the same period, the occupying forces have gone as far as to use heavy weaponry and helicopter gunships. In many cases, they have wilfully caused a large number of casualties and losses among our people.

In addition to all this ugliness, Israel, the occupying Power, makes unrelenting attempts to lay the blame on the Palestinian side — to lay the blame on those who have been killed and injured. Occupation is to be forgotten; colonial behaviour is to be forgotten; heavy weaponry is to be forgotten; the large number of Palestinian victims, including children, is to be forgotten. And the Palestinian side must be blamed because it dared to scream. The Palestinian people must be blamed because they have expressed their anger and frustration through demonstrations and by throwing stones at the soldiers of occupation. They are even subjected to accusations that reflect the racist thinking of the occupying Power, the least of which is that the Palestinian people are being instigated and that the leadership intentionally pushes our children to be killed by Israeli gunfire.

The Assembly can imagine, then, the magnitude of the tragedy that our people are living. It can imagine the amount of anger, pain and desperation that they feel, especially since all this is happening after years of swallowing our suffering out of concern for the continuation of the peace process and the hope of reaching a different reality — without settlements, without restrictions on freedom of movement and with better living conditions and the achievement of a Palestinian State that coexists with Israel. Now our

people ask, "If this is peace, what is occupation and what is war?"

The recent tragic events, which began on 28 September, started with the ill-intentioned visit of the infamous Ariel Sharon to Al-Haram Al-Sharif, the first qiblah and the third of the holy sites of Islam, in occupied East Jerusalem, followed the next day by the Israeli occupying forces' storming of Al-Haram and attack on the innocent worshippers therein. Our people saw all this as a flagrant aggression against their holy places and as a prelude to other steps by the occupying Power aimed at undermining their rights and possibly at establishing other illegal realities in East Jerusalem. In standing up to this, our people expressed their rejection of these acts and of occupation, as well as their determination to defend their Islamic and Christian holy places and the Arab nature of East Jerusalem, and their determination to achieve their natural rights, including the establishment of their own independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

In response to the Palestinian protest, Israel, the occupying Power, used its huge war machine to launch a bloody campaign of repression against our people, which included a number of wilful killings, including the killing of many children. Israel also wilfully caused numerous serious injuries and great pain for the civilians. Needless to say, these acts constitute grave and serious breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949. Some of these acts constitute war crimes according to the Convention.

In addition, Israel has imposed severe restrictions on the movement of persons and goods. It has closed international crossing points as well as the Gaza international airport. It has also used tanks and other heavy weapons to impose a siege on many Palestinian cities and villages and other Palestinian locations.

Why all this savagery and brutality on the part of Israel? We are not yet sure. It is difficult to imagine any reason that justifies these actions. However, it may be possible that the Israeli political leadership believed that by doing this it would break the political will of Ithe Palestinian people and leadership, thereby forcing them to make unacceptable concessions in the peace process. It may be that the Israeli political leadership concluded that it had no future unless it created a new situation in Israel, so that it could form an enlarged Government. It may be possible that some officers, for personal reasons, are responsible for the excessive use of force. All of these are ugly possibilities, and I do not think there is a less heinous possibility.

Israel, the occupying Power, in an attempt to divert attention from the realities of what is happening, has stressed that some Palestinian policemen and other armed persons exchanged fire with Israeli occupying forces. In reality, there was not a single shot fired by the Palestinian side for at least the first three days of the bloody Israeli campaign. Even after that, individual arms were used only after the great shock caused by Israeli brutality. And up to this moment, in spite of everything that has happened, there have not been any large-scale exchanges between the Palestinian police and the Israeli occupying forces. We must also remember the illegal presence of the Israeli settlers and that most of those extremists are armed with weapons, delivered to them by the Israeli army, that surpass whatever small arms are in the possession of the Palestinians. Those settlers, who are present on our land illegally, have committed many atrocities against our people. They must be stopped and held accountable. More importantly, their colonial presence must be terminated. They must leave Palestinian land.

I should now like to deal with two mistakes committed by some angry Palestinian civilians, which should never have happened in spite of everything. The first relates to Joseph's Tomb near the city of Nablus and the damage that was done to it. Over the years, Israel has transformed this place into a fortified military outpost, and in the few days preceding the Israeli withdrawal from it, 18 Palestinian people were killed around this place. This explains the angry reaction of the people. Nevertheless, we have clearly condemned what happened and have issued instructions to immediately repair the place. Before and since the occupation, we have maintained this place for many years, and there is no change in our position in this regard. We expect that Israel will do the same thing with regard to the historic mosque that was burned by Israelis in the city of Tiberias.

The second relates to the two Israeli soldiers who were killed by some individuals who broke into the police station in the city of Ramallah, despite attempts by the police there to protect the two soldiers. Those individuals had strong reasons to believe that the two soldiers belonged to a special military unit called the *al-musta'ribeen* unit. This unit has on previous occasions infiltrated Palestinian areas and committed

various savage acts against Palestinians, including the summary execution of some individuals. It is extremely difficult to believe the Israeli version that the two soldiers had lost their way into the heart of the city of Ramallah, in the light of the current situation and the number of Israeli checkpoints surrounding the city. Despite this, we have clearly condemned the killing of the two soldiers; furthermore, instructions were issued to apprehend those who committed this act because it was illegal and is incompatible with our values.

These issues and others cannot change the real nature of what is happening — namely, the excessive and unjustifiable use of force and the commission of many atrocities by the occupying Power against an entire people, a people expressing their anger and frustration because of the occupation and attempting to defend their holy sites.

There is an issue that the General Assembly must consider, given its importance and dangerous nature, namely, the brutality used by the Israeli police against Arab Israeli demonstrators inside Israel, resulting in 15 killings and hundreds of injuries. Those people were expressing their anger and their rejection of the occupying Power's aggressive acts against the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. They were expressing solidarity with their brethren there. But the Israeli Government confronted that solidarity with the use of deadly force in a way that does not differ much from its practices as an occupying Power. What happened there reminds us of the many questions about so-called Israeli democracy, the nature of that democracy and whether it truly applies to all citizens of Israel.

The Security Council has dealt with the bloody events in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, with great seriousness. A large number of Member States, through their participation in the debate in the Council, added to the importance and seriousness of the Council's deliberations. After a few days, the Security Council did indeed, despite the difficulties it faced, adopt a very important resolution — resolution 1322 (2000), dated 7 October. We must at this point thank the members of the Council, in particular the President of the Council for this month. We are also duty-bound to thank the members of the Council who are members of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries for joining in sponsoring the resolution and for their insistence on the need for the Council to shoulder its responsibilities.

However, despite the adoption of the resolution, the situation on the ground did not change, and Israel, the occupying Power, did not comply with any of its provisions. Then came the dangerous Israeli escalation, including the shelling of some Palestinian locations in Ramallah and Gaza, which took place on 12 October and which was tantamount to a declaration of war against the Palestinian people. We then returned to the Security Council once again and called upon it to adopt immediately a resolution to end the escalation and prevent the region as a whole from entering a comprehensive, all-out confrontation. Unfortunately, we were not successful in this regard because a permanent member of the Security Council declared inside and outside the Security Council and the United Nations that it would use its right of veto to block any resolution, regardless of its content. This clearly meant that the Council would not be able to take any action. At that point, we, and the Arab Group, had no choice but to request the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, in accordance with the "uniting for peace" formula, to consider this dangerous situation and the illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. Following that, the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries unanimously supported the Arab request, which we highly appreciate.

The new development now is the convening of the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit on 16 and 17 October. We express our high appreciation for the efforts made for the convening of the Summit as well as our gratitude to the host country, sisterly Egypt, and all the other participants aside from the two parties concerned. This summit and, before it, the meetings that were held in Paris and Sharm el-Sheikh, which were boycotted by Israel, all represent serious attempts to rescue the situation and possibly later to revive the peace process. Such attempts deserve our support and backing. Nevertheless, we must also note that there was no signed communiqué issued by the summit and, at the same time, there were certain ambiguities with regard to the understandings reached. There is also the constant concern stemming from our experience of Israel's non-compliance with anything previously agreed upon.

The important thing now is to see what will happen on the ground, especially with regard to the withdrawal of tanks and other heavy weapons, the

lifting of the siege on the Palestinian territory and its cities and other steps towards a return to the situation that existed prior to the present crisis. No one will be happier than the Palestinian people if these bloody events cease, the occupation is brought to an end and a comprehensive and lasting peace is achieved. We, on our part, will make every effort to make the understandings of Sharm el-Sheikh a success, but we and the world also want to see what Israel will do and will continue to follow the situation closely. We will review the draft resolution we have submitted to the Assembly, in consultation with the interested parties in the light of such developments and in the light of what will happen in the coming hours. We hope, as always, that we will receive the Assembly's support.

We welcome the participation of the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, representing this international Organization in the Sharm el-Sheikh summit, as well as all the efforts he made during his visit to the region. We hope that this will lead to the effective participation of the United Nations in the mechanism of inquiry into what happened, as called for in Security Council resolution 1322 (2000) and agreed upon by the parties in Sharm el-Sheikh. We believe that the speedy establishment and immediate work of this committee will be effective in ending the situation created during the last three weeks. We also hope that the Secretary-General will inform the General Assembly of the outcome of his visit and his efforts immediately following his return to New York. We look forward to hearing from him on Friday.

We thank the Assembly, and especially you, Mr. President, for reconvening this tenth emergency special session, and we look forward to the Assembly's support. We also look forward to a better situation in our country, Palestine, and in the region as a whole. Our people want a life free of occupation; they want independence, they want the establishment of their State, and they want it to become a Member of the United Nations, just like any other people in the world.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): For the second time in two weeks, a United Nations body is being forced to consider the grave situation we are currently facing in the Middle East. We hope that the statement made this week in Sharm el-Sheikh will succeed in restoring calm and quiet to the region. I must note, however, that the deliberations of this special session threaten, and are contrary to, the spirit of that declaration, and have the potential to aggravate and disrupt efforts under way to bring an end to the violence.

While it is important that we continue to focus on the future and to enhance the spirit of the peace process, I feel it is my duty to speak on behalf of both my Government and my people concerning the events of the past few weeks.

These events, which have been so graphically and tragically portrayed in the media, call out to us on a personal and political level; personally, because of the immense human tragedy which has unfolded, but politically as well, for these events imperil the future of peace and stability in Israel and in the Middle East.

As I am sure we are all aware by now, this past Thursday morning, two Israeli reserve soldiers were lynched by an angry mob after they mistakenly entered the Palestinian-controlled town of Ramallah. The soldiers were apprehended by Palestinian police and brought to their headquarters. A violent mob of Palestinians, having followed the soldiers to the station, stoned the building and proceeded to torture the soldiers to death, mutilating and defiling their bodies beyond recognition. The entire world watched with disgust as a soldier's body was thrown from a window, while Palestinians proudly displayed their bloody hands and frenzied crowds competed for the questionable privilege of inflicting one more blow on the soldier's already lifeless body. That this unspeakable act could have taken place inside an official building of the Palestinian Authority only contributes to the degradation of mutual trust and confidence that we have worked for so many years to establish.

I believe it would be instructive at this juncture to note the divergent reactions among Israelis and Palestinians to losses suffered by the other side. With every funeral procession, replete with images of anguished family members and painful suffering, Israelis expressed their sorrow and regret for the tragic deaths of Palestinians. During Security Council deliberations last week, I expressed the profound sadness that both I and the Israeli people share with the Palestinian community over their losses.

In stark contrast, my distinguished colleague the Permanent Observer of Palestine, Ambassador Nasser Al-Kidwa, in a statement quoted last week by Reuters, had the audacity to defend the killing of the two Israeli soldiers in Ramallah, saying,

> "The amount of anger ... frustration ... [and] pain is beyond belief. The Palestinian people, we believe, have the right to feel that way and it is absolutely understood for them to react in a way which probably is not acceptable under normal circumstances."

I feel compelled to inform my Palestinian peace partner that it is not understandable how human beings could carry out such a grossly inhuman act, to take such macabre pleasure in the taking of life and display such pride and insensitivity to a horror-stricken worldwide audience. Peace will not come while such acts remain possible and while senior Palestinian officials fail to express contrition for them.

Thursday's brutal lynching is not the first instance in which official organs of the Palestinian Authority have tolerated, encouraged or even directly engaged in violent actions against Israelis. As we have already stated, before the Security Council and in our letter to the Secretary-General, Palestinian policemen, security personnel and armed militias have directly participated in many of the recent bloody clashes. There have been numerous instances in which Palestinian forces turned their weapons on Israeli soldiers and civilians, in flagrant violation of both the letter and the spirit of our signed agreements.

One incident in particular sparked tremendous outrage and sorrow among Israelis, Jews and believers around the world. Joseph's Tomb, a site holy to both Jews and Muslims that is located in the Palestinian-controlled town of Nablus, has been the target of gunfire and violent attacks by Palestinian civilians, police and armed militias in recent weeks. In an effort to reduce tension, an agreement was reached on 6 October whereby the Israeli personnel on duty at the site would be temporarily removed and the Palestinian Authority would ensure its continued protection and preservation. With the removal of Israeli personnel, a frenzied Palestinian mob, together with members of the Palestinian police, entered the site, set it ablaze, sacked it, violated it and commenced dismantling the historic and sacred structure of the Tomb. This insufferable act of sacrilege, directed at the most sacred and fundamental tenets of the Jewish tradition, as well as of civilized society, has shocked and outraged the Israeli people. We hold the Palestinian leadership fully responsible for this intolerable act in the light of its incitement and encouragement of mob violence in the area.

I must stress yet again that events such as these are not occurring spontaneously. The Palestinian Authority, rather than using its position to prevent violence and urge restraint, has allowed its official television and radio to be used for purposes of incitement, calling on its people to carry out attacks on Israeli citizens and soldiers.

For example, this past Friday, 13 October, Dr. Ahmad Abu Halabiya, a member of the Palestinian Authority's Fatwa Council, appeared on the Palestinian Authority's official television station, calling for jihad and the murder of Jews. In the same breath he further called upon Muslims to kill Americans wherever they may be. He said,

> "Wherever you are, kill those Jews and those Americans who are like them and those who stand by them. They are all in one trench against the Arabs and the Muslims."

Hassan Asfour, a Minister of the Palestinian Authority and a member of the Palestinian negotiating team, was quoted by Reuters on 9 October as saying, "Every Palestinian must place the settlers as a target". And the following day, he called for an escalation of the conflict on Voice of Palestine Radio.

Other Palestinian officials have made similar remarks, calling on their people to engage in violent acts against Israelis and Jews, and to carry on the war to liberate Palestine. Israel has repeatedly called upon Chairman Arafat to fulfil his obligations under our agreements and to cease all forms of incitement and calls to violence.

In another disturbing development, the Palestinian Authority last week freed scores of terrorist prisoners who had been convicted in Palestinian courts of committing violent acts against Israelis. Some reports have even indicated that not a single member of the terrorist group Hamas remains incarcerated in Palestinian jails.

Members of Hamas and Islamic Jihad were even invited to participate in a meeting of the Palestinian cabinet, an act which legitimizes their stated commitment to terrorism as an alternative to peaceful negotiations. This is a move that will certainly be interpreted by other extremist elements as a green light to renew deadly terrorist attacks on Israeli cities, such as those which occurred in the winter of 1996 and which still burn in our memory.

Taken together, these actions all point to an alarming pattern of behaviour by the Palestinian leadership. They are sending a clear signal to their people, to Israel and by now to the world, that they are choosing the path of violence. It must be understood that only a negotiated solution satisfactory to both Israelis and Palestinians can lay the foundation for coexistence.

It is unfathomable that, despite the incitement and repeated calls for holy war on Israel, the Palestinians continue to place the blame for the escalation squarely upon Israel. Throughout the eruptions of the past few weeks, Israel has exercised the utmost restraint in responding to Palestinian provocations. In dealing with the near-daily barrage of rocks and Molotov cocktails, Israeli soldiers have responded in a measured fashion, and with all precautions taken to prevent loss of life. Allegations that Israel used "excessive force" in these confrontations are completely unfounded. There is no nation on earth that would tolerate such violent life-threatening attacks against its citizens and not respond in kind. More important, can there be any doubt, after witnessing the brutal lynching of two Israeli soldiers, that an angry Palestinian mob poses a real and immediate threat to human life?

Similarly, in the attack on the Palestinian police headquarters in Ramallah where the Israeli soldiers were savagely murdered, extreme precautions were taken to minimize loss of life. Not only did the Israel Defence Forces take steps to prevent damage to surrounding areas, but they went so far as to provide advance warning to the Palestinian Authority to evacuate the buildings. Despite these extreme precautions, the Palestinian Observer insisted on categorizing these actions as "tantamount to the declaration of ... war" in his letter of 12 October 2000 (A/55/474), and on erroneously making reference to a "heavy loss of Palestinian lives". I wish to state emphatically that not a single Palestinian was killed in the pinpoint attack on the police station in Ramallah.

I must state unequivocally that Israel has never declared war on the Palestinian people, and this that allegation has absolutely no grounding in reality. As our restraint has clearly demonstrated, Israel has no interest whatsoever in inflicting pain or damage on our neighbours, and it serves no one's interest for Mr. Al-Kidwa to portray the situation in that way. Moreover, one needs merely to glance at a Palestinian newspaper or television programme to determine who is declaring war on whom.

In addition, Israel has permitted, and will continue to permit, the passage of humanitarian aid to Palestinians in the territories, including those packages originating in countries with which Israel has no formal diplomatic ties. Israel's actions are intended not to harm, but to maintain order in the area, and are in full accordance with international law. While we deeply regret the loss of life that has occurred, we maintain our right — in fact our obligation — as a sovereign nation to protect our people.

Finally, it must be recalled that the current violence comes on the heels of unprecedented Israeli concessions in the peace process. At the Camp David summit, Prime Minister Barak went far beyond what any previous Israeli Government had ever been willing to consider, let alone offer, in order to reach a permanent settlement with the Palestinians. The Palestinian Authority has responded to these overtures with violence and provocation rather than with serious and earnest negotiation. This is a blatant violation of the trilateral statement issued at the conclusion of that summit, whereby both parties agreed to

> "create an environment for negotiations free from pressure, intimidation and threats of violence".

As a side matter, I wish to make one procedural note on the convening of this emergency special session. The formal basis for holding an emergency special session is contained in resolution 377 A (V) adopted by the General Assembly on 5 November 1950, and in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly as amended in the annex to that resolution. The resolution stipulates three conditions which must be satisfied in order to convene such a session. They are: first, the existence of a situation where there is a threat to peace or an act of aggression; secondly, the failure of the Security Council, owing to lack of unanimity of its permanent members, to fulfil its responsibility for peace and security; and thirdly, the lack of a General Assembly regular session at the time of such a failure. It is clear to all that at least the last two conditions do not apply in this case, and therefore the convening of this session constitutes a disgraceful abuse of the rules of procedure.

Only a negotiated solution, arrived at in an atmosphere free from violence, can put a permanent end to bloodshed and unrest in the Middle East. We

call yet again on Chairman Arafat to order his security forces and his people to stop the confrontations and the provocations, to disarm the militias as he has previously agreed, and to re-arrest members of Hamas and other terrorist organizations who are still at large. We call upon the Palestinian Authority and all its officials to refrain from inflammatory rhetoric and from using the official media to disseminate messages of hatred and *jihad* and calls to murder. We insist that the Palestinian leadership take immediate and concrete steps to halt this scourge and to act to restore peace and security to our region.

(*spoke in French*)

At this point I shall turn to the French language, which I personally feel will enable me to fine-tune the tone and the thrust of my comments on the draft resolution which is now being prepared and which is most revealing about the outcome of this emergency special session.

The proposed draft resolution, apart from being very one-sided and a serene distillate of arbitrariness, unfairness and bias, demands the doggedly unilateral condemnation of Israel. The text as it stands breathes not a word about Palestinian excesses of any kind. The disembowelment of two Israeli soldiers at Ramallah, in a Palestinian police station transformed into a human abattoir, leaves no mark on the immaculate conception of this draft resolution. To use the phrase of Stéphane Mallarmé, this is — even in this instance, however unpoetic the draft resolution may be — a page "defended by its whiteness".

Neither the disgraceful desecration of Joseph's tomb in Nablus nor that of the ancient synagogue of Jericho give rise to any reproach against the Palestinians. The draft resolution's determined silence on the barbaric acts that took place in Ramallah and on the attacks on multisecular holy places in Nablus and Jericho seems to convey an unspoken endorsement of the Palestinians and their leadership.

This silence — as opaque as it is revealing — lends an aura of respectability to primal instincts and to the urge to defile. Clearly, this symptomatic silence will strengthen President Arafat's new vocation as the supreme spiritual helmsman and self-styled spokesman of a billion Christians and a billion Muslims.

Yet that same silence seems to us to be profoundly harmful to the spirit of peace and reconciliation. Since it implies a powerless resignation in the face of these very serious Palestinian actions, it runs the risk, because of the enormous injustice that it does to Israel, of locking the Israelis, for a long time to come, into an instinctive desire for self-preservation and a feeling of persecution.

To pile this type of extremely one-sided opprobrium on Israel while relieving Palestinians of their responsibility for the unspeakable acts does a disservice to peace and warps its letter and its spirit.

That is why we categorically reject this draft resolution, which, in its present form as well as in its spirit, runs blatantly counter to peace. Yet peace is within reach. The concrete political achievements stemming from Oslo and the promising outlines of the final status agreement that arose out of the Camp David summit, and especially the fabric of daily life, woven among peoples over seven years, cannot be annihilated by the tragic events of the past three weeks.

It is up to us, Palestinians and Israelis alike, to take positive steps forward in order to replenish our creative energies and achieve peace. It is here, at the bottom of the chasm into which we have fallen, that our mutual recognition, sealed at Oslo, must stave off any instinct of mutual negation.

Mutual recognition, the driving force behind the Oslo process, is the determining factor for achieving irreversible peace in our region. Mutual recognition will enable us to overcome the tragic setbacks and the painful contradictions inherent in the passage from disorder to a new order, and it will ensure the triumph of wisdom and reason. Through mutual recognition, our sufferings, our pain and our torment will be transmuted into truces and dreams that will bring about peace and reconciliation.

Palestinians and Israelis must rely on their own resources and on mutual assistance rather than on a draft resolution which is a repository of indignation for some and of bitterness for others. Peace between Israelis and Palestinians must be achieved amid the echoes of a joint call for peace.

I hope that this prestigious body, the General Assembly, will, in the near future, see the barriers of adversity transformed into sounding boards of coexistence and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians and between Israel and the countries of our region.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I am taking the floor before the Assembly, in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, because recent tragic events oblige us to resume the tenth emergency special session so as to address once again the situation in occupied Palestine, a situation that is fraught with danger and that requires that we give its consideration the highest priority.

Indeed, for more than two weeks now, deadly violence has been raging in all the Palestinian areas. Bloody confrontations became unavoidable after the provocative visit by Mr. Sharon to the sanctuary of Al-Haram Al-Sharif, during which he was accompanied by a group of members of the Knesset belonging to the Likud party and escorted by a large contingent of security agents and Israeli police officers. There was bloodshed, serious injury and a tragic toll: more than 110 killed, most of them Palestinians, and some 3,000 injured. This is the horrifying spectacle that still haunts us, along with the massacre of Palestinian children, some barely 2 years of age. The Israeli Defence Forces reacted to the demonstrations with disproportionate, brutal and indiscriminate force, often making use of metal bullets, live ammunition, tanks, armoured transport vehicles, helicopter gunships, anti-tank missiles and fragmentation bullets.

Another equally disturbing spectacle involved armed Jewish settlers, authorized to move within the towns and villages controlled by the Palestinian Authority, and able to use as they saw fit their firearms against the defenceless population.

To compound the difficulties of the Palestinians, the Israeli Government proceeded to systematically seal off Palestinian territory, immobilizing 3 million Palestinians and preventing them from working.

Finally, Israeli Defence Forces bulldozers dug ditches and trenches in the roads to prevent any movement between Jerusalem and towns controlled by the Palestinians.

These are all illegal measures designed to inflict a collective punishment on a people. Are they not also measures that gravely violate the human rights of the Palestinian people? And finally, are they not measures that deny a people the basic necessities of life?

We should not lose sight of the fact that the events we have been witnessing since 28 September are clearly the result of Israeli acts, measures and policies that contravene the letter and the spirit of the Declaration of Principles and of subsequent implementation agreements. I should like to emphasize that Israel remains rigorously bound by those agreements, which it has signed; by the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949, and by other norms of international law.

Concerned about the prolonged deterioration of the situation and the escalation of the violence, our Committee — the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People — welcomed with satisfaction all of the efforts made by the international community to bring an end to the violence and save the peace process. The international community further reacted to the events by bringing this matter to the attention of the Security Council. The Council adopted resolution 1322 (2000), by which it called for the immediate cessation of the violence and stressed the importance of establishing a mechanism with a view to carrying out an objective inquiry into the events. The Council also called for the immediate resumption of negotiations in the framework of the Middle East peace process.

For its part, the Committee that I represent has also reacted to these events, and at its meeting on 10 October it adopted a declaration on the situation in the occupied territory of Palestine in which it reaffirmed that the United Nations must continue to shoulder its permanent responsibility regarding all aspects of the question of Palestine, including Jerusalem, until this issue is resolved in a satisfactory manner, in accordance with United Nations resolutions and with respect for international legitimacy, and the Palestinian people are able to exercise their inalienable rights.

That is why we in the Committee welcome the particularly important role which the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has just played, and we express our satisfaction with the efforts that he made to bring an end to the violence and massacres. We appreciate the steps he took to convince the parties to come back to the negotiating table. We also commend him warmly for his active and constructive participation in the overall efforts he has made to contain the violence. The Secretary-General has once again shown his clear-sightedness and political courage and has thus been able to give peace a new chance.

The Committee also shared the grave concern of the international community about the effects of these confrontations and the fear that they will get out of control, leading to unforeseeable consequences. The Committee calls on the parties, in particular the Palestinians and the Israelis, to show maximum restraint in their actions on the ground and to foster a return to the negotiating table. We believe that the time has come — it may be the last chance — for the international community as a whole to actively support the parties by encouraging them to engage in dialogue and reconciliation. The differences between Israelis and Palestinians may be deep-rooted and even difficult to overcome, but it is incumbent upon all of us to spare no effort to save the entire peace process, which is going through its final and most critical stage.

Our action should therefore be seen against the backdrop of justice and international legitimacy, as was clearly reaffirmed by the Security Council in resolution 1322 (2000). As a Member of this Organization, Israel is bound to respect and implement the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, as well as those set forth in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council. Israel has the right to live in peace and security, but it must link its own requirements to the rights of other peoples in the region also to live in dignity, peace and respect for their rights and convictions.

We join in the congratulations addressed to all of those who have taken part in the peace efforts, in particular the President of the United States of America; President Mubarak of Egypt, who hosted the summit in Sharm el-Sheikh; the President of the European Union; and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. But special mention should be made of Prime Minister Barak and President Yasser Arafat, without whom no conciliation agreement would have been reached. Thanks to their vision and leadership, we venture to hope that the escalation in the violence that we have seen in recent days will be stemmed and that the tension in the streets and in people's hearts will be relieved.

The Committee wishes to join with the majority of the members of the international community in calling upon the Israeli Government, political parties and security forces to refrain from taking any new steps that might complicate the situation and undermine the peace process. Israel, as the occupying Power, must ensure respect for the Holy Places, guarantee the protection of Palestinians and their property in occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and endeavour, without further delay, to implement fully and in good faith the agreements already concluded with the Palestinian authorities with a view to reaching a just, complete and lasting settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The Sharm el-Sheikh summit undoubtedly represents a confidence-building measure; it is a new milestone designed primarily to help to ease a crisis which threatens to destroy all that has been achieved in recent years in the peace process. To let the opportunity offered by the summit to slip away would, quite simply, be unreasonable and irresponsible on the part of all of those throughout the world who, with clear-sightedness, courage and patience, have planned and implemented the peace process since the Madrid Conference in 1991.

The Committee welcomes the results of the Sharm el-Sheikh summit and expresses the hope that henceforth true progress will be achieved so that peace and stability might finally reign in this region — a crossroads of history and civilization that has brought the world so many valuable messages of peace and wisdom.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Just over a month ago, the heads of State and Government of the United Nations gathered in New York to commemorate the Millennium Summit. At that historic meeting, they renewed their commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter and to enhanced collaboration in the maintenance of international peace and security.

It was thus with a sense of urgency that the Non-Aligned Movement overwhelmingly supported the request of the Arab Group to convene a meeting of the resumed tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider the critical situation in the Middle East. The Non-Aligned Movement firmly believes that it remains the permanent responsibility of the United Nations to fully engage in the Palestinian question until it is effectively solved in all its aspects. The Non-Aligned Movement pledges full support for the present efforts of the Secretary-General in the quest for peace. This reaffirms the cardinal role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

The Non-Aligned Movement is seriously concerned by the tragic events that have taken place in the region since 28 September. In this regard, the Movement deplores the use of excessive force by the Israeli army against the Palestinians and regrets the unacceptable loss of life, the high incidence of injuries and the severe material damage.

We note with keen interest the outcome of the Sharm el-Sheikh summit hosted by President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and we welcome the participation of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union Javier Solana, leaders from the region and King Abdullah II of Jordan, as well as that of United States President Bill Clinton.

We believe that the Sharm el-Sheikh summit represents but a step in the right direction, and we welcome the agreement regarding Israeli troop withdrawal and the lifting of the blockade on the Palestinian territories, as well as the reopening of Gaza International Airport. We trust that these measures will go a long way in defusing tensions and creating the necessary conditions for the speedy resumption of the Middle East peace process.

The Non-Aligned Movement is convinced that an impartial fact-finding commission, working in conjunction with the United Nations and in keeping with the United Nations mandate to act as custodian of world peace and security, would serve to prevent the recurrence of these tragic events. In this regard, we call for the full and expeditious implementation of Security Council resolution 1322 (2000), which was adopted at the emergency meeting on 7 October. We urge the Council to remain seized of this vital matter, in accordance with its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security.

At the Non-Aligned summit of heads of State or Government that took place at Durban in 1998, the Movement reaffirmed the applicability of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War — the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 — to all the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. The Conference of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention held at the United Nations in Geneva in July last year issued an important statement that stated its readiness to reconvene should the need arise. The High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention agreed to ensure respect for the Convention, in fulfilment of their collective responsibility. This is stipulated in common article 1 of the Geneva Conventions, which states that

> "The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances."

At the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement the leaders reiterated that the observance of these international instruments would help to relieve the suffering of all victims and provide them with effective protection. It is essential that the international community, recognizing that armed conflict endangers the lives of civilians, take steps to ensure that all efforts are made to enhance respect for international humanitarian law defined for the protection of civilians in time of war so that civilians can live as normal a life as possible, and in accordance with their laws, their cultures and their traditions.

The question of Palestine, which is of tremendous significance to the Non-Aligned Movement, constitutes the core of the Middle East conflict. The achievement of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence is pivotal to the achievement of a sustained and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. It is our firm belief that peaceful negotiation is the only means of ensuring lasting peace, security and stability in the region.

We urgently call on all sides to pull back from the brink and cease all hostilities, renew their resolve for dialogue, and do their utmost to create an atmosphere conducive to peaceful negotiation. All parties in the region must refrain from any activity that would foment further violence. All should undertake whatever steps are necessary to preserve the sanctity of the Holy Places in the City of Jerusalem, and prevent any action that could be construed as an incitement to further destruction of the Holy Places.

At Cartagena in April of this year, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Non-Aligned Movement reiterated the need for compliance with, and implementation of, the agreements reached between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, as well as the fulfilment of the commitments and pledges made in accordance with the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference and the ensuing negotiations. Moreover, the Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirmed at New York in September of this year their

determination to actively strive towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and on the basis of land for peace.

The Movement fervently hopes that a resuscitated peace process will culminate in a definitive final settlement towards an independent Palestinian State. It is incumbent upon the sponsors of the peace process and the international community to exert all efforts to ensure its success. We pledge full support for the current initiatives of leaders towards the restoration of the peace process in the Middle East, a process that held so much promise not so long ago.

Allow me to quote from the statement read out at the United Nations in New York last November on behalf of President Thabo Mbeki in his capacity as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement on the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

> "We call upon the international community to remain steadfast in its commitment and support for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East and the realization of the legitimate rights of all Palestinians. The people of Palestine, and indeed the whole region, need our support for their efforts to put an end to a conflict that has plagued the world for so many decades.
>
> "It is clear that peace will not only have an effect on the lives of the people of these ancient lands, but that it will also reverberate around the globe. It will promote the cause of international peace and security in a fundamental way." (*A/AC.183/PV.249, p. 9*)

The General Assembly should send a clear message to the Palestinian people that, until a just and comprehensive solution is achieved, the responsibility of the United Nations regarding their plight has not diminished. The Non-Aligned Movement pledges to remain fully involved until the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people are achieved.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting. The remaining speakers will be heard on Friday, 20 October 2000, beginning at 3 p.m. sharp.

The Observer for Palestine has requested to exercise his right of reply. May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to 5 minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I give the floor to the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): We have heard the regrettable statement by Mr. Yehuda Lancry, and I would like to make the following observations.

The statement reflected the same Israeli pattern, the same Israeli method of ignoring the essence of the issue under consideration by giving a detailed and graphic description of a specific incident — as if Israeli blood differs from Palestinian blood, as if Joseph's Tomb is more important to God than the Tiberias Mosque. He tried to provide the most unimportant detailed information, such as statements by people we do not know and specific attacks on specific personalities. He did this by using inappropriate methods, such as giving partial or out-of-context quotations.

I will give you an example. The Israeli Ambassador quoted only part of the statements given by Ambassador Nasser Al-Kidwa on 12 October before the Security Council in the morning. In that statement, he said "I do not want to defend this act and I repeat it is not concomitant with our culture and our values". The same statement was made on the same day on the CNN network. Mr. Lancry does not really want to know the facts. Maybe he is deliberately misguiding and misinforming us. Frankly, if the objective is misinformation, then what he says and his personal attacks on me are of no value to me.

Mr. Lancry talked about our message to the Security Council in which we said that Israeli acts are "tantamount to a declaration of war" against the Palestinian people and that the bombing has caused heavy losses. If bombing by helicopter of Palestinian positions, including a location near the Palestinian headquarters in the Gaza Strip, is not tantamount to a declaration of war, then when can we believe that the Israelis are actually declaring such a war against us?

Mr. Lancry has used expressions such as "pinpoint attack", and since I have never committed such crimes, I do not know what such expression means. Nor do I know expressions such as "benign occupation" or "benign military attacks". But I must

apologize to Mr. Lancry that the Palestinian mission, at the time our positions were being bombed by helicopters, did not have any precise information about the casualties. The occupying Israeli forces did not give us time to apologize because it continued to cause more casualties.

Mr. Lancry also said

(*spoke in English*)

> "There is no nation on earth that would tolerate such violent life-threatening attacks against its citizens and not respond in kind."

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Who are these citizens? And what are they doing in Palestinian territories? Why are the occupiers there? Their presence flagrantly violates Security Council resolutions, the Geneva Conventions and many other agreements. Why does the occupation not end? This is the issue, Mr. Lancry. This is the issue, leaders of Israel. The issue is the occupation of an entire people, the Palestinian people. This should come to an end.

As for what Israel actually did, Mr. Lancry quotes:

(*spoke in English*)

> "Israeli soldiers have responded in a measured fashion, with all the precautions taken to prevent the loss of life. Allegations that Israel used excessive force in these confrontations are completely unfounded."

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Let us listen to what the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Giacomelli, said before the Human Rights Committee in Geneva yesterday. He said:

(*spoke in English*)

> "Israeli forces appeared to have indiscriminately used excessive force in cases where there was no imminent threat to their lives."

He also blamed Israeli settlers and said that they were acting as "paramilitaries responsible for at least five Palestinian deaths".

(*spoke in Arabic*)

There are, of course, many human rights organizations and television cameras; there are hundreds and thousands who have witnessed this Israeli criminal practice against the Palestinian people. If an international tribunal were to be established today, it would take these Israeli officials to court for the deliberate killing of Palestinian citizens. As for the emergency extraordinary special session, it seems that Ambassador Lancry has not listened carefully to what one permanent member of the Security Council said in its declaration that it would not allow the Council to take up the issue. If that Permanent Representative were to change his position, then we would be happy to present this to the Security Council, which could assume its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. As for the draft resolution which was presented — actually, the pretext given was "We are not ready to deal with it".

Finally, there was a point I did not want to include in my original statement, but I am forced now to include it. There have been rumours today that Israel has abducted a number of Palestinian citizens from the town of Ramallah. If this is true, then it proves the existence of the Al-Musta'ribeen and the criminality of this unit. This would represent a very dangerous development on the ground, as well as a threat to what we arrived at in Sharm el-Sheikh.

I would like to repeat my thanks to you, Mr. President, for your patience and for listening to some of the issues mentioned today.

The President: Before adjourning this meeting, I would like to remind members that at the outset of the Friday, 3 p.m. meeting, the Secretary-General intends to make a statement on the latest developments on this item. After that the Assembly will hear the remaining speakers.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.